

C.I.A. ROLE TRACED IN STUDENT GROUP

Ex-Association Official Tells
of Leaders' Recruiting

By WALLACE TURNER

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A former employee of the National Student Association said in an interview here that the Central Intelligence Agency held sway over the actions of the association by controlling the small group that each year ran the students' group.

This summation was given by Michael Wood, 24 years old, formerly the director of development for the association. Mr. Wood was the chief source of the article in Ramparts magazine exposing the C.I.A.-N.S.A. relationship. The interview was held in the Ramparts offices here.

In discussing the relationship, Mr. Wood lapsed into the cover language in which the C.I.A. is the Firm or the Agency and those who have been sworn to secrecy and told of the relationship are the "Witty."

Told About Each Other

"People are acknowledged to one another," he said. "In your department they will tell you who knows and who doesn't know, so you know who to talk to. You will be acknowledged to the Witty people in your department."

There were eight who knew last year and nine the year before, he said.

One of the important elements in maintaining control was that the top officers were "made Witty," Mr. Wood, a red-bearded young man explained. He said that each year 15 well-placed, highly competent students had been admitted to the International Student Relations Seminar, which was operated for 13 summers until it was canceled last summer.

"All this time, officers and staff of the association who are Witty are really observing people and developing choices for office holding," he said. "The Agency has to be concerned about who is chosen. The director of the seminar usually is a Witty agent."

Recruiting Grounds

The seminar was pictured as a recruiting ground for the officer material for the student association and this in turn was a recruiting ground for agents of the intelligence agency. Over

the years, Mr. Wood said, a corps of former association officers' campaign in Michigan, then it has been built up in Covert Action Division No 5 of the C.I.A., with which the student group's secret relationship was maintained.

He said it was "sort of like an alumni group." Such C.I.A. agents always attended the association national meetings, and played a vital role in decision making at Madison, Wis., in August, 1965, he reported.

"In that year, Vietnam was debated very bitterly for nine hours," Mr. Wood said. "The agents were very anxious, first of all, that no absolute position be taken, and concerned that no permanent cessation of bombing position be taken."

Voted for Talks

The student association voted for negotiation and for cessation of bombing providing some show of willingness to negotiate came from the North Vietnamese, he said, satisfying the agency lobbyists.

On another occasion, he said, it was proposed that three of the five delegates to the International Student Conference be elected, rather than named by the association's officers.

"All those people who go to the I.S.C. are Witty agents," Mr. Wood said.

This proposal, he related, was quashed by the full force of the intelligence agency's lobbying group. He explained that such a plan would have inhibited the gathering of intelligence at international student meetings, since some American delegates would not have had C.I.A. connections.

Mr. Wood described himself as a "Stevensonian progressive, the type of person who finds himself constantly being shoved about by the insanity of present American policy, both domestic and internationally." He said he considered "the war in Vietnam atrocious."

"I think it's bitterly brutal," he added. "It makes me ashamed of being associated with the present Government."

Wanted To Make It Public

When he learned of the C.I.A.-N.S.A. relationship, he said he felt impelled to make it public. He said he had been told of the connection by Phil Sherburne, association president for 1965-66, who was trying to persuade Mr. Wood not to leave his development post with the student group in frustration over its mysterious relations with some foundations.

Mr. Wood said he had first tried to get Mr. Sherburne "to have the Firm make me Witty." He said he had planned to expose the relationship on his own account once he had been admitted as a party to the secrecy.

This was not done. Last summer, new forces came into control of the student association and Mr. Wood was discharged.

He busied himself with the voter of former association officers' campaign in Michigan, then in December decided to tell his story. He spoke with Maurice Stone, a New York representative of Ramparts who put him in touch with Warren Hinckle 3d, the magazine's editor.

He had intended, Mr. Wood said, to try to force Mr. Sherburne and others to make the disclosure, but they would not and did not until the C. I. A. relationship was announced in advertisements taken by Ramparts in The New York Times and The Washington Post.

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